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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/691,929

10/22/2003

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PA2587US

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22830 7590 07/09/2008
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EXAMINER

THOMASSON, MEAGAN J

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3714

MAIL DATE

DELIVERY MODE

07/09/2008

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/691,929	Applicant(s) CAMPBELL, SCOTT	
	Examiner MEAGAN THOMASSON	Art Unit 3714	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 19 February 2008.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-24 and 26-30 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-24 and 26-30 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 22 October 2003 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Amendment

The examiner acknowledges the amendments made to claims 1,19-24 and 30. Claim 25 has been canceled; claims 1-24 and 26-30 are pending in this application.

Claim Objections

Claim 30 contains amendments made to the claims, however it is labeled as "previously presented". Claim 30 should be labeled as "currently amended".

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

Claims 1-24 and 26-30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yoshida et al. (US 6,652,376 B1) in view of Mott et al. (US 5,269,687).

Regarding claims 1,2,12,19-22,24 and 30, Yoshida discloses a method, system and computer-readable storage medium having embodied thereon a program for displaying a graphical path in a video game, comprising retrieving graphical path data associated with a previous run, displaying the graphical path data as a visual string of path markers, and determining a color for a displayed path marker of the visual string of path markers based upon a comparison of a player's current speed and a reference speed at a given point.

Specifically, Yoshida discloses retrieving graphical path data associated with a previous run in that the video game system displays a reference path travel line established by a previous run (col. 11, lines 37-41), wherein the reference path may be displayed as a visual string of path markers (Fig. 9, 10,14,15,19). A color is determined for a displayed path marker based upon a player's current travel speed relative to the reference, i.e. ideal, travel speed that was established on a previous run (col. 10, lines 20- 42). For instance, if it is determined that the player's current travel speed exceeds the ideal travel speed, the graphical path markers change colors (e.g. turn red) in order to indicate to the player whether they should apply the brakes to decrease their current travel speed (col. 12, lines 4-33). The reference speeds are recorded for each point, i.e. block, in the path (col. 2,lines 48-53).

Yoshida does not specifically disclose determining a color for a displayed path marker of the visual string of path markers based upon an elapsed time from a starting point to a current location of a player character of a current video game session and an elapsed time from a starting point to the current location of the player character associated with the displayed path marker from the previous run. However, it is well known in racing-type video games to provide a player with a visual indication of a current lap time in comparison with a previous lap time, as disclosed by Mott (Fig. 5, Current Lap **192**, Previous Best Lap **194**, Lap Time **162**; col. 5, lines 60-67). That is, Mott displays an elapsed time from a starting point to a current location as the player approaches the finish line in the form of a Current Lap time display (Fig. 5), which measures the amount of time that has elapsed from the beginning of the race until the player reaches the finish line point. Mott visually displays a comparison of a current elapsed time to a previously recorded elapsed time from a starting point to a finish line location of a player in the Previous Best Lap time display (Fig. 5). Additionally, Mott discloses the use of a ghost car **150** (Fig. 3,4), i.e. graphical path data, which visually displays to the player a complete recording of a lap previously run by the user (col. 5, lines 8-37).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to combine the color changing graphical path markers of Yoshida with the current and previous lap time indicators of Mott as these are both means of visually providing information to a player during a video game play session. Further, Mott specifically discloses providing instruction to a player for parameters other than time in col. 5, lines 26-34, which

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teaches providing indicators for speed similar to the invention disclosed by Yoshida. To provide a visual indication of current lap time compared to a previous lap time is known in a racing-type video game system; providing an indication of a game parameter in the form of color changing path markers is also known in a racing-type video game system. To modify Yoshida's color changing markers to provide an indication of a currently elapsed time compared to a previously recorded elapsed time, instead of based upon current speed compared to a previously recorded ideal speed, would have required only routine skill in the art. Thus, all of the combined elements were known in the prior art and one skilled in the art could have combined the elements as claimed by known methods with no change in their respective functions, and the combination would have yielded predictable results to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention.

Regarding claims 3-7,26 Mott discloses the ability to determine a character state associated with a player character, including whether the character state is an off-track, on-track, or crashed state (col. 7, lines 14-24). Thus, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to provide a visual indicator for any particular character state that may be associated with a player character as Mott teaches several examples of said character states able to be determined by the game.

Regarding claims 8-11,14,15 Mott discloses the ability to display a visual, graphical indicator for previous lap times in Fig. 4, including a champion best lap time ("Beat" 164), previous run lap time ("Last" **164**), and player best lap time (Fig. 5, "Previous Best Lap" **194**). Therefore, it would have been obvious to display any

previous run, including a worst time and an average time, as Mott discloses the ability to measure multiple player lap times.

Regarding claim 13,23,29 Mott discloses storing the current graphical path data as “best time” run graphical path data if a total elapsed time of the current video game session is less than a total elapsed time associated with a previous “best time” run, wherein a new best time obtained by a player is stored and displayed as the ghost car path (col. 5, lines 35-37).

Regarding claim 16, Yoshida discloses the visual string of path markers are generated at substantially equal-distance from each other (Fig. 9, 10,14,15,19).

Regarding claims 17,18,27,28 Yoshida discloses retrieving the path data associated with a previous run, i.e. the reference data, from a data cache (i.e. database) on a memory (i.e. ROM), in col. 8, lines 31-38.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed February 19, 2008 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Specifically, applicant's arguments that Yoshida/Mott do not teach an elapsed time from a starting point to the current location of the player character associated with the displayed path marker from the previous run as the current lap time disclosed by Mott is not the same as the elapsed time of claim 1 (Remarks, P. 9). The examiner does not find this argument to be persuasive because the current lap time shown by Mott in Fig. 5 refers to the amount of time it has taken a player to travel from the starting point to the finish line where the player is currently

located, i.e. the amount of time that has elapsed during this lap. That is, the starting line is the starting point and the current location is the finish line, and Mott records the amount of time that has elapsed as the player travels between these two locations on the track. This time is then displayed alongside and may be compared to the time it took the player to travel this same distance in a previous run. Comparing the complete current time to the complete time of the previous run sufficiently meets the limitations of the invention as claimed, as the elapsed time from the starting point to the current location is met by the elapsed time from a starting point to a current, finish line location of the player character.

The elements relied upon from Yoshida include providing a visual indication in the form of colors of a current racing element compared to a previously recorded racing element, i.e. a current speed compared to a previously recorded ideal speed. The elements relied upon from Mott include providing a visual indication of a current elapsed time compared to a previously recorded elapsed time. The ghost car teaching of Mott is mentioned as further motivation to combine the elements of providing visual indications in the form of a graphical path, not as a teaching of the claim elements themselves.

Conclusion

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within

TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to MEAGAN THOMASSON whose telephone number is (571)272-2080. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 830-5.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Xuan Thai can be reached on (571) 272-7147. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

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/Meagan Thomasson/
July 6, 2008

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